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ABSTRACT

Corporations have assumed many roles in promoting early childhood education and care and family support. To select services or programs to offer their employees, many companies go through a planning phase that involves an analysis of employees' needs and a review of community resources. The three most frequent solutions to helping employees solve problems of work and family have been the provision of information and financial assistance through corporate child care resource and referral programs, Flexible Spending Accounts, and parent seminars in the workplace. About 200 corporations have created child care centers. An increasing number of companies have developed initiatives to increase the supply and quality of child care services; individual or collaborative corporate contributions; special funds; and sponsorship of accreditation efforts. Four major groups convene the task forces on local child care problems with which businesses tend to be involved: the United Way; resource and referral agencies; chambers of commerce; and state executive offices. Corporations are also involved in legislation relating to child care. Questions concerning corporate endeavors to provide child care assistance center around the degree to which corporate programs: (1) are developed with thoughtfulness; (2) deplete the community of its best resources; (3) improve quality or endorse efforts to lower standards; and (4) are attracted to family support programs at the workplace or see them as peripheral. (HOD)

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THE ROLE OF THE CORPORATION IN PROMOTING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT SYSTEMS

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PS 020774

- A nursery school teacher calls an early childhood educator who works regularly with corporations. "I think it's time for me to make a career change," she said. "I want to work with corporations, helping them set up child care centers for their own employees."

This conversation indicates an important new trend: over the past decade corporate involvement in the field of early childhood education and care has become increasingly commonplace. Thus, it is not at all surprising that a nursery school teacher would see working with corporations as a legitimate avenue for a career change. Her belief that companies are routinely providing on-site centers, however, is erroneous. As this paper will reveal, providing on-site care is only one of the numerous roles that corporations have assumed in promoting early childhood education and care as well as family support. This paper will review the development of each of these roles (using case studies as illustrations), delineate obstacles, and discuss the impact of these roles. Finally, conclusions will be drawn. Because there has been a greater corporate involvement in child care than in family support, these examples will predominate.

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PROVIDING GENERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

For many years, much of the corporate giving to child care has been channeled through the United Way, whose mission is "to increase the organized capacity of people to care for one another." Company volunteers seek donations from individual co-workers. In addition, individual community members are also solicited. The resulting monies are distributed among designated member agencies to "address unmet needs in the community."

For example, the United Way of Rockland (N.Y.) was founded in 1964 by 12 core volunteers. That year six companies, with the assistance of fewer than 100 volunteers, raised $190,000 for member agencies, or $55,000 more than the agencies had been able to raise alone. In 1989, $1,050,000 was raised and over 295 local companies participated. Four day care centers and the local child care resource and referral agency were among the numerous recipients of these funds (United Way of Rockland County, n.d.).

Nationwide, the funds given to child care programs through United Way have increased. According to a survey of 375 United Ways, in 1983 over $40 million were distributed; in 1987, that amount had topped $66 million. The amount targeted to child care centers represented 2.9% of their total giving and a 1986 record of fund distribution indicates that 890 centers had been served nationwide (United Way of America, 1987).

United Way agencies determine giving by establishing a "priority basis." The latest survey of 451 United Ways indicated thar 21% child care seen as a priority. Within this general rating, some United Ways designate a specific aspect of child care. United Ways in Lehigh, Northhampton and Warren Counties (Penn.) established a Child Care Advisory Committee to investigate the prevalence of local latchkey children. Upon finding that many

children were left alone while their parents worked, they targeted giving to programs to serve these children.

Numerous corporate foundations have also made individual donations to child care and family support programs. Until recently, most corporate donations to education were concentrated on universities and high schools and were clearly intended to bolster students' preparation for labor force entry. As it has become evident that problems of literacy and scientific achievement have their roots in early childhood, and as the rate of high school dropouts rises, some foundations have begun exploring the possibility of funding local child care and family support programs. It is, however, still unusual for the individual child care or family support program to receive general support from corporate foundations. The National Child/Care Staffing Study found that, on average, only 6 percent of centers' budgets came from donated monies (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1989).

DONATING EXPERTISE AND PRODUCTS

Another longstanding corporate role is that of benefactor. When I visited exemplary child care programs in the mid 1970s for my book, The New Extended Family: Day Care That Works (Galinsky & Hooks, 1977), I found that many directors tried to tap local corporations for cast-offs. Surplus paper was used for drawing, packing crates for makeshift buildings in house corners, and plastic scraps for collage materials.

The use of donated materials reaches a pinnacle in the Maryland Committee for Children's office building in downtown Baltimore. The ground floor is filled with beautifully designed displays heaped with buttons, scraps of materials, and intriguing industrial parts, all for the use of local day care centers and family day care homes.

Corporations have also donated expertise. The graphics art department at Orange and Rockland, a New York State utility, has designed brochures for the Rockland Council for Young Children. Lederle Labs printed a calendar illustrated with children's photographs; the proceeds from the calendar sales went to support child care in Rockland County.

Child care and family support programs have also sought business assistance assistance in marketing and fiscal management. Most frequently, they receive this help by inviting corporate managers to serve on their boards, but occasionally companies have loaned executives to help manage a fiscal crisis or develop a strategic plan. Some programs seek out the assistance of retired executives. For example, Family Focus, a parent support program in the Chicago area, contacted Executive Service Corporation. For a small fee that went to maintain the services of this agency, a volunteer spent hours working with the Executive Director of Family Focus, reviewing their bookkeeping procedures and helping to devise a workable system for financial management.

SCRUTINIZING THE DELIVERY SYSTEM

Currently 4,650 American companies provide some form of child care assistance for their employees (Friedman, 1989a). Many have gone through a careful planning phase to select the kinds of programs they want to offer their employees. This planning typically includes an analysis of employees' needs and a corresponding review of the community resources available to meet those needs. Although intended to help employers select child care options, these community assessments also function as a market analysis of the local child care delivery system. In this process, gaps in service as well as strengths are identified (McConaghy & Siegel, 1988).

The experiences of Johnson & Johnson can serve as an example. Johnson & Johnson contracted with Resources for Child Care Management (RCCM) to assist their Work/Family Task Force in arriving at recommendations. RCCM conducted a community assessment at J&J's various locations. This review revealed, for example, that in the State of New Jersey only 15% of needed care was provided by regulated child care programs; most parents used underground, unlicensed and unregulated care. Accordingly, most parents found it difficult to find care, especially for infants and school-age children, and many were leaving their children at home alone. Inclement weather caused particular problems. While the cost of care was high (between $110 and $150 for infant care in one county), caregiver salaries were low ($12,000-$17,000 for assistants and teachers, respectively). Thus, staff turnover was high, exceeding 50% in some locations. This community analysis was helpful in leading Johnson & Johnson to make the decision to establish at least two on-site centers.

With money from corporate contracts, over 200 child care resource and referral agencies nationwide serve as what McConaghy and Siegel (1988) term "data librarians." In the course of helping to match parents with child care, they tabulate the relation of parent need and preference for care in specific neighborhoods to the availability of openings. In this way, supply and demand ratios can be tracked.

This activity in the child care marketplace is a relatively new phenomenon. Because the child care system is largely home-based and informal, it has lacked both analysis and planned growth. It is not uncommon for large gaps between supply and demand to exist. In The New Extended Family: Day Care That Works, William Hooks and I compared the growth of child care to a field filled with weeds and flowers, springing up willy-nilly. Obviously, there are exceptions -- Kinder Care's selection of the morning side of the highway (the route most frequently used for parent employees to get to work) as sites for

their centers is one -- but until the infusion of corporate needs assessments and corporate-supported resource and referral analyses, the child care marketplace was largely unmonitored.

PROVIDING INFORMATION AND FINANCIAL RESOURCE

The three most frequent solutions to helping employees solve work/family problems have been 1) the provision of information and financial assistance through corporate chid care resource and referral (CCR&R) programs, 2) Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs), and 3) parent seminars at the workplace.

Child Care Resource and Referral is a counseling program to help parent employees find and judge child care. By 1989, 1,200 companies provided CCR&R programs (Friedman, 1989a). These services are either contracted out to a national R&R organization such as Work/Family Directions in Watertown, Massachusetts, who subcontracts to local agencies, or directly to local agencies. A few companies like the Lincoln National Corporation run their own in-house R&R service. When employees need child care, they telephone a counselor (or meet in person if the service is in-house) who obtains information about the child's age, cost requirements and the parents' preference for type of care and location. The counselor then provides information on how to select quality care, and after the conversation, selects several options that meet the parents' criteria, calls to see if there are openings, and forwards the information to the parent. The CCR&R counselor does not make the selection for the parent but merely provides suitable alternatives for the parent to select among. After several weeks, the counselor calls the parent to determine if care has been obtained and if so, how satisfied the parent is both with the child care and with the R&R service. Almost all CCR&R agencies also provide assistance in locating child care free of charge to the general public. This service is usually subsidized by state contracts

and foundations. The corporate service, called "enhanced resource and referral," is more personalized than the services received by the general public.

A Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is a salary reduction plan made possible by Section 125 of the IRS Code. Employees can reduce their salaries by up to $5,000 and be reimbursed for child care and certain other expenses with these pre-tax dollars. There are certain restrictions on FSAs. First, employees can use either an FSA or the Dependent Care Tax Credit but not both, and providers being reimbursed are required to claim the income on their own taxes, disallowing any use of the underground child care market. Furthermore, if the funds in the account are not used up by the end of the first year, it must be forfeited. In 1989, approximately 2,000 companies had established FSAs (Friedman, 1989a).

Although the pervasive image of corporate involvement in child care is that of on-site child care centers, most companies encourage their employees to buy into local child care systems, through corporate assistance in both finding and paying for local care. Many corporate executives do not want to be in the child care business. As one said, "We're in the pharmaceutical business, not the day care business and we ought to stick with the business we know." Company executives also note that pumping money into their own community child care system is a "good neighbor thing to do." Rather than set up a competing service, they are trying to improve local child care. Presumably, more information on how to select quality care and more money to purchase it will stimulate the American free enterprise system.

The impact of this type of involvement has been impressive. Largely with corporate dollars, a child care resource and referral system has been forged across America. Where CCR&R agencies did not exist, companies such as IBM (and more recently, AT&T) have

provided seed money to create them. Where they did exist, corporate money has helped them achieve greater fiscal and operational stability. An increasing number of states are now funding these agencies; California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Maryland, and New Jersey have statewide CCR&R coverage (McConaghy & Siegel, 1988). CCR&R is becoming the hub of the child care system, helping to monitor and plan its growth, to broker among the various constituent groups, and, as I will describe later, to recruit and train new providers.

Taking a nationwide view of the impact of corporate involvement in the child care system, a problem becomes readily apparent. As the New York State Task Force on Work and Family observed, companies tend to become involved in local child care in parts of the country where the care is of higher quality (New York State, 1989). Furthermore, the locations of the Fortune 500 companies that have pioneered these services tend to be in the prosperous parts of the country. By these well-meaning efforts, the gap between the more affluent, successful communities and those less so, is widening. Furthermore, even within those communities served, the corporate employees who receive "enhanced R&R" are entitled to a more customized service than the parents who don't work for one of these employees. In fact, one CCR&R in Portland, Oregon, serves only employees of subscribing companies and is not available to the general population. It may be that companies are sapping the best care for their employees, leaving the lesser quality care for other parent employees who may also receive less pay and have fewer benefits.

Analysis of FSA usage also shows they serve more well-off employees. Parents need a sufficiently high income to be able to afford to cut half their salaries, pay for child care with a smaller salary check and wait to be reimbursed (Friedman, 1985).

Parent Seminars at the Workplace are workshops or lectures giving parents information and support to enable them to achieve a better balance between their job and family responsibilities. A 1984 study by Catalyst estimated that over 1,000 employers were conducting seminars at the workplace for employed parents. These seminars provide family support, although they are more likely to be organized by CCR&R agencies than parent educators or family support programs. For example, IBM contracted with Work/Family Directions to develop a curriculum for work/family seminars and to conduct these programs through their network of CCR&R agencies in their over 200 locations. In some corporations, a specific vendor conducts the majority of their work/family seminars, as has been the case for Bristol-Myers and Bank Street College. In other cases, each seminar is contracted to different experts as has been the custom at Time, Inc. Some companies use in-house experts who convene regular support groups.

In professional conferences on this subject, the providers of lunchtime seminars express frustration that the typical pattern of holding one session every few months or even once a year is a superficial approach to family support. A subject such as single parents is introduced; participants become involved and eager for more depth and then the allotted hour and a half is up and the company representatives feel that they have "fully covered" the topic and go on to the next one. The pattern followed by Merck & Co., Inc. provides much more depth. A several-week series on a specific topic is offered. The participants can return to the subject of parenting preschool children or managing time after exploring some of the concepts at home.

PROVIDING DIRECT SERVICE

Approximately 200 corporations have created child care centers. Management schemes range from complete to very little corporate control:

Company-owned and operated: the company is fully responsible for the daily operation and management of the center. Since 1980, Hoffman-La Roche has operated a child care center for 60 children at its Nutley, New Jersey, headquarters. The staff at the center are employees of Hoffman-La Roche and thus receive above-market wages and benefits. The company also subsidizes the program to the amount of $1,000 per child. In response to long waiting lists at the center and the perceived benefit that Hoffman-La Roche has been deriving from this initiative, they have budgeted $1 million for expansion so that twice as many children can be served. Such generous subsidies enable less highly paid employees to afford the service.

Company-owned, contracted service: under this fiscal arrangement, the company contracts a vendor to provide the child care service and can change vendors if there is dissatisfaction. Such was the scenario at Campbell Soup Company in Camden, New Jersey, in the mid 1980s. The company was using a large, for-profit chain to operate its center. When parents' complaints about the high rate of staff turnover began to surface, the company hired a consultant from Resources for Child Care Management to evaluate the service and eventually hired Resources for Child Care Management to run the center. The center now serves 110 children and receives a 40% subsidy, which makes it possible for employees at all income levels to enroll their children.

MacCare, an on-site center serving McDonnell Douglas employees in St. Louis, has a slightly different arrangement. While the center is under the auspices of the company, it is a separate subsidiary, responsible for its own budget. The company provided the start-up cost and donates the cost of the space, a rambling, spacious old elementary school, minutes away from headquarters.

Employee-owned and operated: several corporations have provided start-up money for on- or near-site programs to be owned and operated by employees. The Employee Center for Young Children serving Merck in Rahway, New Jersey, and the center that serves World Bank employees in Washington, D.C., are two examples of this management form. At Merck, the center was established with a $100,000 grant. The long waiting list recently prompted the company to donate the land and provide major funding for a new center closer to the Rahway facility that will be twice as large as the current program (150 children).

The problem with this management arrangement is that parent fees must cover the full costs of care. If the program is to serve less well-off employees, there is constant pressure to raise funds, to crowd the classrooms with more children, or to pay lower salaries. These potential compromises in quality are draining to the directors who voice their concerns at conferences, stating that the companies get a lot of positive public relations for these programs but don't understand the day-to-day struggle to assure quality.

The centers at Merck, Hoffman-La Roche, and McDonnell Douglas are all expanding because employee demand far outstrips the number of children that can be served. Most employee centers have long waiting lists, especially for infant care. In such a situation, difficult decisions must be made. If there is an opening, does the program take the renowned Ph.D. job candidate that the company is trying to recruit or the secretary who has had her name on the list since her child's conception? Expanding the center is clearly not the only solution to this problem. While there has been talk of creating a network of family day care providers clustered around the on-site center, this initiative has rarely materialized.

Prior to creating an on-site program, a common obstacle is a concern about equity. The provision of a program that by its very nature serves only one select group of employees flies in the face of a corporate commitment to providing benefits that serve all employees equally. When need outpaces supply, as is frequently the case at on-site centers, employees on the waiting list do feel disgruntled. In contrast, employees without children or those who choose a different form of care rarely complain about the center. Most employees are said to be glad to work for a company that has an on- or near-site child care center.

Another inhibiting factor is the fear of liability suits. Companies worry that parent employees will go after the corporations as the "deep pockets" if an accident at the program occurs. Employers who sponsor centers report that the cost of insurance is not at all prohibitive and that perhaps because of an insistence upon quality, suits are almost non-existent. When risk management training for insured providers becomes more commonplace, the hype surrounding liability insurance should subside. A new report commissioned by the Department of Labor should also help dispel the myths around this problem (Friedman, 1989b).

A third obstacle to on-site centers is their cost. Start-up costs and ongoing subsidies are expensive. Companies justify this expenditure by saying that if just a handful of employees are retained as a result of the center, the cost is worthwhile.

A recent review of the research on the benefits of an on-site care by Friedman (1989c) indicates that on-site programs do not affect absenteeism (perhaps because of more stringent policies for sick children at on-site centers) as much as recruitment and retention. In view of impending labor shortages, this is an interesting finding. Although the benefits

of on- or near-site centers are being revealed by research, corporate child care consultants have made numerous, and to some extent, exaggerated claims over the years. The past decade has seen only marginal growth in the provision of direct service. The growth that has occurred has been an expansion of centers in hospitals (800 centers) and federal agencies (200 centers). Nevertheless, some companies who originally rejected this option are currently reconsidering, and real estate developers are beginning to offer child care centers as an amenity within office park complexes.

The impact of on- and near-site care on the community child care system is complex. Some claim that a corporate center, with its increased visibility and higher salaries, will cream off some of the best local teachers. If the center is open to non-employee parents, there is fear that the parents most committed to quality will be drawn to the program, thus again, siphoning off individuals who could serve as catalysts to improving the community system. Local providers, particularly the mom-and-pop businesses, claim that the corporate center skews competition, giving the corporate center an unfair advantage.

There are others who argue just the opposite: that better salaries and better quality will "trickle down" into the community, serving as models and inspirations. Without research on these issues, the impact of on-site care is unclear. I suspect, however, that the impact partially varies as a function of how involved the staff of the center is with other local providers and how cooperatively they all work together.

INCREASING THE SUPPLY AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

When corporate representatives begin to investigate the local child care system, they often discover its unwieldy intricacies. Needs assessments reveal that approximately one in two employed parents have difficulty finding child care, that the multiple arrangements parents put together are tenuous, and finally that the range of quality runs the entire gamut (Galinsky, 1988; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1989). Companies thus recognize that if they establish CCR&Rs or FSAs but local care is inadequate, these services could provoke more dissatisfaction than satisfaction. Furthermore, they realize that corporate-sponsored centers might drain the local system. In response, an increasing number of companies have begun to develop initiatives to increase the supply and improve the quality of child care services through a variety of means: CCR&Rs, individual or collaborative corporate contributions, special funds, and sponsorship of NAEYC accreditation efforts.

RECRUITING AND TRAINING THROUGH CCR&RS

In 1984, IBM established an important precedent in corporate involvement in child care by targeting a percentage of their CCR&R fee for efforts to increase the supply and improve the quality of local child care. Since that time, Work/Family Directions, the IBM contractor, has made this function a part of its service for other corporate clients. To date, over 55,000 new providers have been recruited. Of these, 45,000 are family day care homes. Work/Family Directions estimates that approximately 20% of the per employee fee paid by companies is used for recruitment. A nationwide survey of the services that CCR&Rs provide found that 93% of the 200 agencies recruit family day care providers (Friedman, 1989).

Another feature of CCR&R's services is training. Work/Family Directions also give special grants for this purpose. Local agencies provide ongoing training and hold conferences with the express purpose of improving the quality of local services.

CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS

Corporate giving has slowly begun to identify the need to increase supply and enhance quality. One of the most innovative grants was made by 3M's McKnight Foundation. These funders recognized the havoc that low caregiver salaries were creating, contributing to staff turnover and the inevitable erosion of quality. They gave a $468,000 grant to improve salaries in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area, including mini-grants to programs and intensive training in such matters as budgeting.

A number of recent efforts to increase the supply of better quality care has been directed specifically at family day care in response to the fact that most children are in family day care settings. For example, American Express funded Child Care, Inc., a CCR&R agency in New York City, to recruit and train providers.

In March 1988, Mervyn's, a division of Dayton Hudson, launched a program entitled Family to Family. The intent of this four-year, $3,714,800 initiative is to increase the quality of family day care in 15 communities where Mervyn's stores are located. Their goals are:

- A potential accreditation model will be developed establishing quality standards for family day care.
- Nine funded providers in 15 communities will be accredited.
- Fifteen local family day home training institutes will be established.

- Four thousand family day home providers, of which 2,000 will be newly recruited, will be trained, providing 20,000 children with a quality family day care environment.

A major consumer education effort will be launched to increase parents' awareness and expectations of quality in family day care. In addition, Mervyn's is providing a real service to other potential funders in this area by funding an evaluation of Family to Family.

COLLABORATIVE FUNDING EFFORTS

The California Child Care Initiative Project (CCCIP), one of the most comprehensive efforts to increase the supply of high quality child care, was spearheaded by the BankAmerica Foundation and eventually involved a collaboration of 33 organizations, including 23 businesses and 10 public agencies. Overall, $3.2 million has been raised since 1985. By the middle of 1988, 1,600 licensed new homes were established, serving 6,500 children (Friedman, 1989d). A 1987 evaluation comparing providers recruited by CCCIP with other providers found the recruited group more likely to avail themselves of training opportunities and less likely to quit or leave the field (Friedman, 1989c). The Ford Foundation has now funded replication of CCCIP in other states.

CHILD CARE FUNDS

AT&T pioneered this type of corporate assistance with its groundbreaking union-negotiated Family Care Fund in the summer of 1989. Beginning in the spring of 1990, $10 million grants will be available for local AT&T sites to engage in efforts to increase the supply and improve the quality of local child care for their employees. As planned, a local individual or group of employees will sponsor proposals to be considered by a board specifically created to award these grants.

Since the AT&T initiative is just beginning, it will be some time before the results of this intervention can be ascertained. Given that the fund is specifically aimed at addressing AT&T's employees' problems, it will be interesting to evaluate the impact on local child care: will this effort siphon off the best community child care for AT&T employees, or will the fund stimulate a general improvement of quality?

ACCREDITATION EFFORTS

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the largest professional organization of early childhood educators, with 70,000 members and 400 affiliate groups nationwide, has developed a program to accredit high quality early childhood centers. Since this program was launched in 1986, 1000 programs have been accredited and 3535 are enrolled (NAEYC, 1989). In the fall of 1989, several major corporations asked NAEYC to help them fund the accreditation fees of programs in their communities (whether or not employees' children were served) in order to increase the number of high quality local programs. IBM, one of these companies, announced a $250,000 effort (as one part of a $23 million child care fund) to assist programs to become accredited. Such initiatives, if they become more widespread, could have considerable impact on elevating the standards of center-based programs.

LOCAL OR STATE TASK FORCES

As individuals, a number of business executives have pledged to assume leadership on task forces to identify and solve local child care problems. Although there has been no systematic analysis of the origins and prevalence of these efforts, there seem to be four major conveners:

THE UNITED WAY

In locations as diverse as central Massachusetts, Danbury (Connecticut), Alexandria (Virginia), Dade County (Florida), and Minneapolis (Minnesota), the United Way has assembled task forces on the crisis in early education and care. An inspiring example occurred in Minneapolis. Chaired by the CEO of Honeywell, this United Way Task Force was named Success by Six. Its intent was to identify the obstacles that prevented children from entering first grade as successes and to eliminate these roadblocks, a strategy now being replicated in other communities.

RESOURCE AND REFERRAL AGENCIES

The Maryland Committee for Children assisted in the formation of a public/private partnership whose aim was "to increase workforce productivity and promote economic development by strengthening the child care delivery system." The Maryland Employers Advisory Council on Child Care was chaired by the CEO of Commercial Credit Group, Inc. Their concluding recommendation (now becoming a reality) was the creation of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network, a network of CCR&R's, coordinated by a statewide Resource Center that is to maintain a statewide database, provide training and technical assistance to the CCR&R's, coordinate public policy efforts, raise funds for the network, broker contracts, and serve as a liaison with child care delivery systems in other states.

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

The St. Paul Chamber of Commerce convened a Child Care Task Force to assemble data about their community and brought in local and national experts. A notable feature of this task force was that it didn't conclude with a report bound to grow dusty on the bookshelf. They not only outlined what they planned to accomplish, they set objectives, timelines, and strategies. Many of their goals have since been enacted.

THE STATE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Numerous Governors and Lieutenant Governors across the country have developed mechanisms to address the child care crisis. Their strategies include conferences (e.g., in Virginia and Indiana), task forces (e.g., in Tennessee and Oregon), and CEO breakfasts (e.g., in New York). In some states (e.g., Wisconsin) and cities (e.g., Los Angeles) a employer-supported child care coordinator job has been created. The purpose of these efforts is to involve the business community in formulating community solutions to local child care problems or in the provision of services for their employees.

The Coalition for Utah's Future serves as an interesting example of this trend. Originally established by one Governor, but supported by the next, the coalition was directed to help "the state plan and implement its future." According to former Governor Scott H. Matheson, "the basic commitment of the coalition would have to be to ensure that its goal would be fully and effectively implemented in the shortest possible time." One of its subgroups, the Task Force on Children, constituted of many business leaders, has conducted a comprehensive study of Utah's problems. They found that 149,412 children between the ages of 0-13 need care and have no relatives to care for them and that the average child care employee's salary was $4.08 in 1988, a significant factor in the 46% turnover rate. This self-study culminated in a conference in September 1989 and has soon-to-be-released recommendations.

Although there has been no formal evaluation of these various efforts, it appears that these action-oriented task forces have the potential to bring about change. Occasionally, the recommendations are ignored or dropped due to a change in state leadership or other factors, but generally they are a catalyst (albeit sometimes slower than advocates would like) to a number of well-conceived and integrated proposals to bring about improvement.

ADVOCATING THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The results of corporate involvement in the legislative process have been more mixed than the other corporate roles. Historically, corporations have been reluctant to testify for child care legislation, feeling that it falls beyond their direct business purview. However, as the links between child care problems and productivity, child care and economic development, and early education and later school and employment success have become more evident, several corporations have stepped across that barrier and used their clout in Congress to urge government action. The CEO of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey testified in June of 1989 for increased funding for Head Start. Representatives from Mervyn's and American Express testified for the child care bill known as ABC (the 100th Congress). American Express, in fact, surprised observers by taking a stand in favor of national standards governing child care.

On the other hand, corporate involvement in the legislative process has also been aimed, perhaps unintentionally, at reducing quality. These incidents seem to follow the same pattern: while trying to establish on-site centers, high-ranking business representatives find the bureaucratic maze and strict standards inhibiting and press their legislators either to drop all legislation affecting corporate programs and rewrite new policies, as was the case in Colorado, or to reduce existing standards, as happened in California. The bill in Colorado passed both houses of the legislature but was vetoed by the Governor Roy Romer.

In these episodes, protection is confused with bureaucracy. It is true that becoming licensed can be difficult and that some existing standard may be ill-founded, but discarding the whole procedure or gutting their protective clauses is not the solution. Perhaps some procedures could be eliminated and/or simplified, and an ombudsman could be appointed to

help companies (and other providers) through the licensing maze. However, laissez-faire thinking has led to proposals (in California) that allow infants to be placed in a tiny room with no available outdoor space in the care of a virtually untrained provider -- because, after all, "their parents are nearby" and "babies sleep all day." This is outrageous. In Washington State, corporations defeated child care legislation for fear of raising taxes. If this trend continues, companies will have taken on the role of advocating against quality care.

THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE INVOLVEMENT

The fact that the corporate community has increasingly become concerned with the field of child care has meant a great deal to many providers. Laboring under difficult working conditions, earning poverty level salaries, watching their co-workers "vote with their feet" and leave the field despite a desire to stay, and being labeled "babysitters" is extremely disheartening. As President of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, I meet with affiliate groups weekly throughout the country. When I report on corporate interest in child care, they feel encouraged. Knowing that business executives take their work seriously has been an inducement to stay in the field and attempt to bring about needed reform.

In addition, corporate involvement in child care has created a career path for a small group of early childhood professionals. Unfortunately, there is little training or preparation for this role. Teachers, tired of the classroom, often assume they can jump in and help corporations start on-site centers. They don't realize that employers and employees may not want this form of corporate assistance and that consultants must be well versed in all forms of corporate initiatives (including time policies and benefits), designing and analyzing needs assessments, conducting focus groups, and working with the corporate

community. Although visions of making money lead some educators to consider this path, such jobs are few and far between. It takes a long time to break into the corporate network -- companies tend to select consultants on the basis of other executive referrals.

As the preceding review has revealed, the major impact of corporate involvement has been to strengthen community child care by increasing its supply and improving its quality. Yet, as this is such a new endeavor, many questions bear addressing:

1. The companies that pioneered child care initiatives have used a very thoughtful process in identifying their employees' problems and creating innovative solutions. As corporate involvement becomes more mainstream, will programs be crafted with the same thoughtfulness and care?

2. A select few pioneering companies have not only developed programs to serve their own employees but have also invested time and money in improving the community system. Will this trend continue or will corporate involvement serve as a siphon, depleting the community of its best resources?

3. Will companies strive to improve quality or will they endorse efforts to lower standards?

4. Since companies have become involved in child care for business reasons (to improve the productivity of their current workforce and the skill of the future workforce), will they be attracted to family support programs at the workplace or will they see these efforts as peripheral?

It seems hard to remember a time when business was uninvolved in early childhood issues, yet this involvement has come about in less than a decade. Although in sheer numbers, the participating companies represent a small fraction of corporate America, the scope of the various roles they have taken is wide. As a movement, however, its direction and effect are yet to be determined.